



SEDGWICK COUNTY, KANSAS  
COMMUNICATIONS

# NEWS

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### GENERAL FIREWORKS INFORMATION

(Sedgwick County, Kansas) – With the approaching July 4<sup>th</sup> holiday, the Sedgwick County Fire Department would like to assist citizens with fireworks safety.

- It is unlawful for any person to possess, store, offer for sale, expose for sale, sell at retail, use or explode any fireworks with the unincorporated areas of Sedgwick County.
- The Sedgwick County Fire Department recommends that all citizens - - "Shoot them where you buy them."
- Sky rockets, bottle rockets and moon rockets are illegal in the State of Kansas.
- Law Enforcement Officers and the Sedgwick County Fire Department Officers are authorized to issue citations for the violation of the adopted codes of Sedgwick County:
  - \$50 fine for possession of fireworks;
  - \$100 fine for failure to obtain display permit.
- It is unlawful to have a fireworks display anywhere without first obtaining a display permit from the Sedgwick County Fire Department. The application process for the permit must be started at least 10 days prior to the event date.
- Check with each incorporated city within Sedgwick County to determine if fireworks are allowed.

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Statistical Information:

Statistics reported by the Kansas State Fire Marshal's Office for the year 2000 indicate that 260 fires in Kansas were caused by fireworks, which totaled \$1.65 million in property damage. This is an increase of 36 incidents (16%) and a property loss increase of \$1.28 million (over 300%) from 1999.

Of the 260 fires, 167 were brush and grass fires; 31 were structure fires; and 11 were motor vehicle fires.

With 85% of Kansas hospitals participating, 181 fireworks injuries were documented in 2000, compared to 162 in 1999.

The Kansas State Fire Marshal's Office received reports of injuries from fireworks to 128 males, 41 females, and 12 unknown.

Fireworks injuries and deaths appear to be on the rise in Kansas as both serious and minor injuries increased by 12 from 1999. Males are 3 times more likely to be injured than females. Those under the age of 19 received two-thirds of the injuries reported in Kansas for 2000. Many are believed to occur due to a lack of adult supervision. Burns are the primary types of injuries, with hands/fingers the most commonly affected (38%). The head and eyes are the second most commonly injured body parts (31%).

In Wichita/Sedgwick County, there were 41 fireworks related incidents with property losses of \$12,575. Area hospitals reported 43 fireworks related injuries in 2000.

This information only reflects what is reported to the Kansas State Fire Marshals' Office. Actual numbers are believed to be much higher, since many injuries are not reported. Fireworks use endangers not only the user, but also bystanders and surrounding property. Disasters happen quickly and there is little time for reaction.

For more information, contact Greg Thompson, Sedgwick County Fire Marshal, or Division Chief Ken Cox at 744-0471.

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